

AHS PPE Taskforce Guidance

Topic: Use of N95 Respirators for Patients Without COVID-19

Date: April 07, 2020, Revised Sept. 24, 2020

Alberta Health Services number one priority is to ensure the protection of our staff, physicians and volunteers from exposure to COVID-19 while at work. The [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#) (PCRA) is a fundamental component of every single patient interaction. On the basis of this PCRA, we support the decisions of our frontline staff and physicians to choose Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) appropriate to the risk and planned healthcare interventions. [Droplet and Contact precautions](#) are recommended for most interactions with individuals confirmed or potentially infected with COVID-19.

Question 1: Should I use an N95 Respirator for patients without COVID-19?

Responsive Guidance from the AHS PPE Task Force:

The use of an N-95 respirator is required for interactions with all patients who require [Airborne isolation](#) for specific illnesses e.g. Tuberculosis, Measles and disseminated shingles (Varicella), and in some situations for certain respiratory illnesses. Review the [Aerosol-Generating Medical Procedure \(AGMP\) Tool page](#) for more information.

Outside of these specific circumstances, N-95 respirators are NOT required for general patient interactions, when caring for intubated patients or during AGMPs.

A fit-tested and seal checked N95 respirator should only be worn when a staff member is performing an [AGMP](#) on a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or when working with an intubated patient who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Prior to providing any type of care, all healthcare workers must perform a [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#) (PCRA). Based on their PCRA and established organizational PPE guidelines, healthcare workers will have access to appropriate PPE when they need it.

It is critical that use of N95 Respirators be considered carefully and used appropriately to ensure that they remain available to us as the number of patients with COVID-19 increases.

Staff are encouraged to review the [COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment](#) page for more information.